

I oppose the broadcast flag mandate by the FCC. In the 1984 Betamax decision, the Supreme Court wisely decided that the government should stay out of what people do with television signals in their own homes. The result was the explosion of a new market in VCRs and movie rentals. Forcing consumers to buy products that have less functionality than what they currently enjoy will only slow the already languishing market for digital television sets. The free market should decide what consumers can and cannot do with digital TV. Any action against abuse of those freedoms should be aimed squarely at the abusers, not at the technology itself.

Remember, this is the same industry that solemnly promised not to abuse the 1998 Digital Millennium Copyright Act. Yet they gave us DVDs with region coding and long, unskippable advertising--restrictions that have absolutely nothing to do with the intent of copyright law. This was (and still is) all propped up by the DMCA's blanket ban on circumvention devices, even when used for perfectly legal purposes. I have no doubt that any mandate for digital television would be abused similarly.